



Montana Department of Corrections FACT SHEET *Reentry: The tools to succeed*

Background

Reentry is not a new concept. Juvenile corrections has been deeply involved in reentry for numerous years and staff in the adult system work on reentry issues every day.

Reentry refers to the transition of offenders from prison back to their communities. It also refers to the programs and services provided to offenders to help increase their chances of success in that transition.

An estimated 97 percent of all inmates eventually are released from prison and about 1,200 leave every year.

The goals of reentry programs are to provide offenders with skills and services needed to reduce recidivism, thereby, decrease future victimization and control correctional spending.

Reentry Initiative

The Department of Corrections, as is the case throughout the nation, is putting a renewed emphasis on the reentry services that it provides and, more importantly, is connecting the dots between prison, prerelease, treatment centers, parole and the communities in which offenders will be returning.

Three years ago, Sen. Kim Gillan of Billings brought together the departments of Labor and Corrections, Montana State University Billings and numerous community and faith-based partners to address the issues that female offenders face when they are released from incarceration. That began the Billings Area Reentry Task Force, which has used a pair of federal grants to launch a pilot reentry program for female offenders releasing into the Billings area. Grant funding will be ending in May of 2013.

In August 2011, the Department of Corrections created a task force to work with numerous state agencies, the university system, law enforcement, and faith-based and other community organizations; to on improving reentry services and creating better coordination among programs that can assist offenders.

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The task force's first priorities were development of a new tool for assessing offenders' risk to return to prison, enhancing contacts with those in communities able to provide housing and jobs to offenders, and working more with offender families to improve chances of successful reentry.

The task force identified a target population of inmates, who statistically are at greater risk to return to prison – those who are 25 years or younger or classified at a higher custody level when released from prison.

Inmates in one or both of those categories account for about one-third of all inmates released.

The task force set a goal of reducing the recidivism rate among that high-risk population by 10 percentage points. In addition, reentry efforts have been established in the community based treatment and prerelease centers. It is estimated that these efforts could result in about 1,080 fewer offenders returning to prison during the next eight years. But the impact would go beyond that population and could result in about 900 fewer offenders returning to other correctional programs – prerelease and treatment centers – as well.

The potential long-term savings from those reductions could be substantial.

Reentry is about more than money. It is about salvaging lives and preventing future victims by giving offenders the tools they need to succeed and remain outside the correctional system.

2013 Legislature
Gayle Lambert
Jan. 21, 2013

Vision

Promote public safety by reducing by 10 percentage points the recidivism rate among inmate populations identified as high risks to return during the next three years.

Mission

The mission of the Montana Offender Reentry Initiative is to reduce crime and enhance public safety by implementing a seamless plan of services and supervision developed with each offender — delivered through state and local collaboration — from the time of his or her entry to custody through transition, reintegration, and aftercare in the community.

Goals

Promote public safety by reducing by 10 percentage points the recidivism rate among inmate populations identified as high risk to return during the next three years.

Create individualized offender reentry plans utilizing risk/needs assessment tools that include offender input, court requirements, treatment issues and case management by prison and community corrections staff that follows an inmate through all phases of correctional placement.

Educate Montana employers on the benefits of hiring offenders, increase offenders' employability and improve offenders' ability to find and maintain employment.

Form an effective public-private agency partnership that promotes appropriate, healthy relationships between offenders and their families through education and improved access to state, tribal and community resources.

Promote adequate housing opportunities that will increase offender success by reducing the number of offenders that return to custody.

Create an offender reentry plan through collaboration among communities, and prison and community corrections staffs.

Montana Reentry Initiative

The Montana Department of Corrections is responsible for managing about 13,000 offenders, with about 80 percent of those supervised outside of prison walls. The total offender population would be the state's eighth largest city if gathered in one place.

Offenders come from almost all of the 56 counties in Montana and 97 percent of those in prison eventually will return to their communities.

Every year, about 1,200 offenders leave prison and return to communities to continue their efforts to develop lives free of crime. Offenders face significant challenges in reentering communities. They need places to live, jobs and transportation. They struggle to rebuild family relationships and to avoid getting into trouble again.

The ability of the state to provide the programs and services necessary to prepare them for their return and then help them after release is the focus of new multi-agency effort. State government must work with local providers to ensure those who have committed wrongs have the opportunity to set their lives right again.

The goal is to improve on existing programs, creating a more seamless system of effective services for offenders, beginning with their arrival in correctional facilities and extending through the day they complete their sentences and leave state supervision.

The ultimate goal of Montana's reentry initiative is to reduce the rate at which offenders return to prison because that will result in a safer Montana, fewer victims and less cost to Montana taxpayers. Reduced demand for corrections funding will mean more money available for other government services such as education.

Success in this effort is the responsibility of everyone because success is in the best interest of all Montanans.

Montana Reentry Initiative

Offering every offender the tools to be a successful, law-abiding and productive citizen



Montana
Department of Corrections
Mike Batista, Director

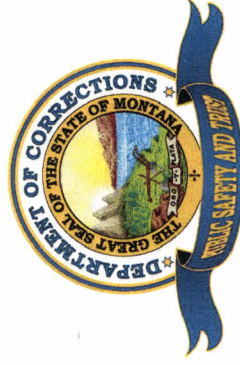
For more information on the
Montana Reentry Initiative:
www.cor.mt.gov/reentry

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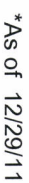


80% of MT offenders outside of prison

20% of MT offenders in prison

The infographic consists of two rows of stylized human figures. The top row, representing 80% of offenders, contains 10 blue figures. The bottom row, representing 20% of offenders, contains 2 blue figures. The figures are simple, with a circular head and a rectangular body.

6,079



of incarcerated offenders will be released to the community

**of released offenders
are non-violent, non-
sexual offenders**

191

- ◆ Full-time employment
- ◆ Educational achievement
- ◆ Regular visits while incarcerated
- ◆ Supervision after release
- ◆ Access to mental-health care
- ◆ Substance abuse treatment
- ◆ Family support after release
- ◆ Adequate, stable housing